

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
1244 Storrs Road**

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

MINUTES

Members: Steve Bacon, Manny Haidous, Jon Hand, Chris Kueffner, Frank McNabb, Ruth Moynihan, Betsy Paterson, Karin Randolph, and Pene Williams

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm and Kathleen Paterson

Guests: Lon Hultgren (Mansfield Director of Public Works); Derek Kohl and Geoff Fitzgerald (BL Companies)

1. Call to Order

Steve Bacon called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes from August 17, 2010

Betsy Paterson made a motion to approve the August 17, 2010 minutes. Frank McNabb seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Update and Presentation from Lon Hultgren, Town Director of Public Works, and BL Companies on Dog Lane infrastructure and Storrs Road improvement plans

Mr. Bacon reminded the Committee about the Monday, October 25 Town public information meeting on Storrs Road improvement design and Dog Lane infrastructure design (the subject of the main agenda for this meeting). The meeting will be held at the beginning of the Mansfield Town Council meeting at 7:30 pm. Betsy Paterson encouraged as many Committee members to attend as possible.

Mr. Bacon introduced Lon Hultgren, Derek Kohl and Geoff Fitzgerald.

Mr. Bacon noted that the Committee will be undertaking significant work over the next few months. He encouraged Committee members to make all the meetings and said some special meetings will need to be held. There also may need to be some

homework done ahead of meetings. He said the Committee will at least be meeting every month.

Lon Hultgren said the public information meeting is required by the CT Department of Transportation (CDOT). The Town and its consultant BL Companies are required by CDOT to respond to public comments from the meeting.

Derek Kohl began his presentation. He said that the CDOT does not require a formal public hearing as there are no major environmental issues that have not already been addressed through the earlier planning processes.

Mr. Kohl said the subject on the meeting on Monday is both the Storrs Road and Dog Lane projects. He said BL is close to catching up the design on Dog Lane with the design on Storrs Road. The Preliminary Design (PD) on Storrs Road was submitted to CDOT in May with 17 CDOT units reviewing the design. Mr. Kohl said that he and his team along with staff from the Town and the Partnership met with CDOT staff in August to hear their comments. Mr. Kohl said the Dog Lane plans were delivered to CDOT this morning.

Mr. Kohl said the current plans call for no left turn out of Dog Lane on to Storrs Road. The main entry will be at Bolton Road extension once that is complete. While Dog Lane is rerouted, there will be a temporary road for construction and emergency vehicles to use that will run in front of Storrs Automotive and adjacent to the UConn commercial block.

Mr. Kohl said the environmental review of the former UConn Publications building has been completed and BL is completing construction documents to bid the remediation and demolition of the Publications building. The goal is to complete the demolition before the road projects start. Mr. Hultgren said the critical path is to get the land transfer/easements done so the Publications building can come down. These approvals will need to go to the UConn Board of Trustees at their meeting this fall or early winter.

Mr. Kohl said the Storrs Road improvements total approximately 2,200 feet. There will be a new pavement structure for Storrs Road. There will be decorative concrete sidewalk in some areas. Frank McNabb asked about the color of the decorative concrete. Mr. Kohl said that BL will work with the master developer LeylandAlliance and the Town to review those type of details. He suggesting timing would be the end of November (75 percent of design stage).

Mr. McNabb asked how utilities would be handled. Mr. Kohl said that the team has reached out to CL&P already. The plan had been to underground 700 to 800 feet of utilities on Dog Lane but the project funding does not allow this to occur. Mr. Kohl said utility plans will be submitted to all the utilities in the next two weeks.

Mr. Kohl said Storrs Road will have wider sidewalks to accommodate pedestrians.

Mr. Kohl said the Level of Service on Storrs Road will be maintained, but not improved. Geoff Fitzgerald said this was in the traffic study done as part of the zoning district approval in 2007.

Chris Kueffner asked if BL has had to make changes based on public information meetings. Mr. Kohl said not everyone will buy-in but the meeting allows for the public to bring up issues that BL may not have considered and should be evaluated, as appropriate.

Manny Haidous asked how curb cuts will be laid out. Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Kohl said the goal is to plan for future development with curb cuts while not having to re-do anything close to the road.

Pene Williams asked if the sidewalk is permeable. Mr. Kohl said it is not but Mr. Fitzgerald said the stormwater system planned throughout the project will be environmentally sustainable.

Mr. McNabb asked if the planned lighting is consistent with the Storrs Center design guidelines. Mr. Fitzgerald replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Kohl said there will be new light poles at the intersections of Dog Lane/Bolton Road with Storrs Road, and S. Eagleville and Storrs Road. The types will be black mast arm.

Mr. Kohl said there will now be two lanes coming out of Post Office Road for ease of turning.

Mr. Bacon asked about the purpose of the landscaped medians. Mr. Fitzgerald said the goal is to create a narrower feel to announce that one is entering a downtown, pedestrian oriented area. The goal is to slow down traffic. The medians can also serve as points of refuge for pedestrians. The median near the intersection of Storrs Road and S. Eagleville will also serve as a gateway marker to the downtown. Mr. Kohl said this median is also mountable for emergency vehicles.

Karin Randolph asked if cars will back up on Storrs Road as people attempt to move in and out of parking spaces. Mr. Kohl said there will be some backing up and it will slow traffic down somewhat, which may not necessarily be a bad idea.

Mr. Kohl said that many main streets have added on-street parking and it can be valuable for adjacent businesses. Mr. Fitzgerald said Route 1 in Westport, CT is a good example of parking on a state road.

Mr. Haidous asked about the status of water and sewer to the project. Mr. Kohl said that sewer capacity is needed. He said that UConn is working on the design of improved sewer lines in Storrs Road and hopes to do this in conjunction with the Storrs Road improvements.

Mr. Bacon asked how many crosswalks are located on Storrs Road. Mr. Kohl said there are two in the Bolton Road area, and one each at the EO Smith High School/Storrs Road intersection and the Town Hall/S. Eagleville intersection.

Mr. McNabb asked about the color of the crosswalks. Mr. Kohl said that the color is still to be determined but that CDOT requires that white striping outline crosswalks.

Mr. Bacon asked if benches will be part of the project. Mr. Kohl said there will be many streetscape features and the Town streetscape project on Storrs Road has been incorporated into the improvement project so one contractor can be hired. It will allow for a uniform look.

Chris Kueffner asked about how the area may be designed to provide a welcoming feel from the UConn campus to the Town. Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Kohl said there had been plans to do a bituminous crosswalk as part of the UConn Mansfield Road project but funding became tight. Mr. Kueffner advocated for creating a flow from the School of Fine Arts to the downtown. Mr. Kohl said that with the overall UConn landscape plan, the goal is to put more trees along Storrs Road. This should give visual cues of linkages along the way.

Mr. Haidous said banners along the street add a great vibrancy to communities. Mr. Kohl said the decorative light poles will allow for banners to be placed.

Mr. Kueffner asked about placing a crosswalk on the north side of Dog Lane. Mr. Fitzgerald said the original plans had a crosswalk mid-block crossing from the School of Fine Arts across Storrs Road but it did not pass muster with the State Traffic Commission.

Mr. McNabb asked about the possibility of a crosswalk on Dog Lane with the traffic from the restaurants and residences to the parking garage. Mr. Kohl and Mr. Fitzgerald said they would look into the possibility.

Kathleen Paterson asked who decides about the location of telephone poles. Mr. Kohl said it would be CL&P. Ms. Paterson expressed concern about the sightlines for pedestrians as they are crossing in the crosswalk near Town Hall from the Friendly's complex. Motorists may also have difficulty seeing a pedestrian. Mr. Kohl said they will attempt to keep poles away from crosswalks to the extent possible.

Ms. K. Paterson asked about the consolidation of the Town Hall/EO Smith lot driveway. Mr. Hultgren said the driveway will continue to be consolidated but will be moved as it affects the left turn lane on Storrs Road.

Ms. K. Paterson asked about construction during events. Mr. Kohl said construction will need to be scheduled around major events.

Mr. Bacon asked if any additional public information meetings are required by CDOT. Mr. Kohl said none are required but it is possible that more could be done as design gets closer to being finalized. He said the Town would have to provide a resolution after the October 25 meeting that it supports the two projects.

Mr. Hultgren said that lanes of traffic will be maintained during construction.

Ms. K. Paterson asked how the public is notified about construction. Mr. Kohl said the Town would issue a public notice a few weeks before construction begins.

Mr. Kohl said that Monday's meeting will also require an overview from CDOT on the needed easements. Mr. Kohl will also need to provide an overview on the environmental permitting. He said there are no major permits required from the CT Department of Environmental Protection or the US Army Corps of Engineers since they were obtained during the earlier planning process.

Mr. Hultgren said the Town is close to submitting its Preliminary Design documents to CDOT for the streetscape portion of Storrs Road to the Liberty Bank plaza.

5. Overview of Zoning Permit Review Process

Ms. van Zelm said that LeylandAlliance and BL Companies would like to bring preliminary design of buildings to Phase 1A and 1B to the Committee on November 16 at 5 pm. The plans are expected to be formally submitted to the Town Director of Planning, with a referral to the Partnership Board of Directors in December or January. The Board will need to hold a public hearing on the plans. She said the process will be for the Committee to make a recommendation to the Board.

Ms. van Zelm said she will be back in touch with the Committee on scheduling and what documents to review (i.e., zoning design guidelines, and sustainability guidelines) after she speaks with Macon Toledano of LeylandAlliance.

6. Review of Next Steps for Public Spaces at Storrs Center

Ms. van Zelm said partly in response to the interest from the Mansfield Advocates for Children on space and programming in Storrs Center, she met with Kevin Grunwald (Mansfield Director of Human Services), Curt Vincente (Director of Parks and Recreation) and Mr. Hultgren. Ms. van Zelm said she will be working with Mr. Vincente on an outline of the process to review the various interests for public space at Storrs Center. She said the town square will not be completed until 2013 but the roads outlining the square will begin to be designed in spring 2011. She said it will be important to begin to develop a plan with the various stakeholders by then.

Mr. Hultgren said there will be a lot of competing interests and it will be important to have a list of what is desired in public spaces to make them uniquely Mansfield. Work needs to be done early on so that design can be incorporated by the designers.

7. Topics for Next Meeting and Set Meeting Date

The Committee will meet next on November 16 with the main topic to be preliminary review of site plans for Phase 1A and 1B.

8. Adjourn

Mr. Kueffner made a motion to adjourn. Mr. McNabb seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The Committee adjourned at 6:47 pm.